

8 kids in youth van among the 12 lives lost to Claudette

Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Eight children in a van from a youth home for abused or neglected children were killed in a fiery multi-vehicle crash on a wet interstate that also killed a man and his baby in another vehicle, the most devastating blow from a tropical depression that claimed 12 lives in Alabama as it caused flash floods and spurred tornadoes that destroyed dozens of homes. The crash happened Saturday about 35 miles (55 kilometers) south of Montgomery on Interstate 65 after vehicles likely hydroplaned on wet roads, said Butler County Coroner Wayne Garlock. The van, containing children ages 4 to 17, belonged to the Tallapoosa

County Girls Ranch, a youth home operated by the Alabama Sheriffs Association. Michael Smith, the youth ranches CEO, said the van was heading back to the ranch near Camp Hill, northeast of Montgomery, after a week at the beach in the Gulf Shores. It caught fire after the wreck and Candice Gulley, the ranch director, was the van's only survivor — pulled from the flames by a bystander. Gulley remained hospitalized Sunday in Montgomery in serious but stable condition. "She's going to survive her physical injuries," Smith said. Two of the dead in the van were Gulley's children, ages 4 and 16. Four others were ranch residents and two were guests, Smith said.

Continued on next page



The U.S. flag flies at half mast Sunday, June 20, 2021, in Camp Hill, Ala., at the Alabama Sheriff's Girls Ranch which suffered a loss of life when their van was involved in a multiple vehicle accident Saturday, resulting in eight people in the van perishing.

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Continued from Front

"This is the worst tragedy I've been a part of in my life," said Smith, who drove Sunday to the ranch to talk to the remaining residents, who had returned from Gulf Shores in a separate van and did not see the wreck.

"Words cannot explain what I saw," Smith said of the accident site, which he visited Saturday. "We love these girls like they're our own children."

The crash also claimed the lives of two other people who were in a separate vehicle. Garlock identified them as 29-year-old Cody Fox and his 9-month-old daughter, Ariana, both of Marion County, Tennessee. "He was a great guy and we're really gonna miss him," said Aaron Sanders, who worked with Fox at the emergency management agency in Marion County. He said Fox also ran a hot tub business with his father and doted on his daughter. "He just loved her to death and that was his life."

Multiple people were also injured.

The National Transportation Safety Board tweeted that it was sending 10 investigators to the area Sunday to investigate the crash, photos of which showed at least four burned vehicles, including two large trucks.



Motorists navigate a flooded Gause Boulevard in Slidell, La., late Friday, June 18, 2021, as a tropical disturbance neared the Louisiana shore.

Associated Press

It said the inquiry would focus on vehicle technologies such as forward collision warning systems, fuel tank integrity and occupant survivability. Meanwhile, a 24-year-old man and a 3-year-old boy were also killed Saturday when a tree fell on their house just outside the Tuscaloosa city limits, said Capt. Jack Kennedy of the Tuscaloosa Violent Crimes Unit. The deaths occurred as drenching rains from Tropical Depression Claudette pelted northern Alabama and Georgia late Saturday. As much as 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain was reported earlier from Claudette along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Flash flood watches were posted Sunday for eastern Georgia, the southern-two thirds of South Carolina and the North Carolina coast. A tropical storm warning was in effect in North Carolina from the Little River Inlet to the town of Duck on the Outer Banks. A tropical storm watch was issued

from South Santee River, South Carolina, to the Little River Inlet, forecasters said. WBRC-TV reported that search efforts were also under way for a man believed to have fallen into the water during flash flooding in Birmingham. Crews were using boats to search Pebble Creek. Garlock said the location of the multi-vehicle wreck is "notorious" for hydroplaning, as the northbound highway curves down a hill to a small creek. Traffic on that stretch of I-65 is usually filled with vacationers driving to and from Gulf of Mexico beaches on summer weekends.

"Butler County has had one of the most terrible traffic accidents," county Sheriff Danny Bond wrote on Facebook, adding: "I believe is the worst ever in our county."

The Tallapoosa County school system said counselors would be available Sunday at the 225-student Reeltown High School, where some of the ranch residents were students.

Smith said the ranch, which is Christian-based, would likely have a memorial service later, asking for prayers as he began to cry.

A GoFundMe account was set up for Tallapoosa County Girls Ranch to help offset the costs of funeral expenses, medical costs for the injured and counseling for those impacted. Gulley had worked with children for years, beginning when she and her husband were house parents at the ranch for seven years.

"During those years, there have been 74 girls that have come through our house and called us mom and dad," she told the Opelika-Auburn News in August 2019. She said she then became a relief parent, working on fundraising and being involved in the community, before she became the ranch director. "My heart goes out to the loved ones of all who perished," Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said in a statement. Top winds from Claudette remained near 30 mph (45

kph) on Sunday.

National Hurricane Center forecasters predicted it would strengthen back to tropical storm status Monday over eastern North Carolina before heading out to sea in the Atlantic Ocean.

The center of Claudette's disorganized circulation was located about 80 miles (128.75 kilometers) west of Columbia, South Carolina. It was moving east-northeast at 17 mph (28 kph), the National Hurricane Center said.

Aside from rainy weather, it seemed to be business as usual along North Carolina's Outer Banks on Sunday.

At Ace Hardware in Avon, shift manager David Swartwood said they were preparing for whatever might come, but the overall sense was that it wouldn't be that bad in that area. He said winds from the south don't usually cause huge flooding problems, so "we don't really anticipate any bad scenarios."

"Everybody here has been through it many, many times, so we're used to the drill," he said. "We've been prepared."

For the hardware store, he said, that means having supplies like flashlights, batteries, tarps, generators, ropes and sandbags on hand. As of Sunday morning, there wasn't a huge rush.

At Stack 'em High in Kill Devil Hills, a restaurant that specializes in pancakes, co-owner Dawn Kiouis said Sunday morning restaurant service was busy.

"We're serving just like normal," she said.

"You keep your eye on the weather and you prepare as much stuff in advance as you can," she said. "Just know she's gonna win. Mother Nature is going to do what she's going to do, so you just prepare." □

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'It lessens my bills': \$500 payments tested in upstate NY

By MICHAEL HILL

Annette Steele isn't destitute or unemployed. But for a year she'll be receiving \$500 per month in no-strings-attached payments as part of an experimental universal basic income program in upstate New York. Places from Compton, California, to Richmond, Virginia, are trying out guaranteed income programs, which gained more attention after the pandemic idled millions of workers.

Steele, a special education school aide, is getting her payments through a program in Ulster County, which covers parts of the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River Valley.

During the pilot program, funded by private donations, 100 county residents making less than \$46,900 annually will get \$500 a month for a year. The income threshold was based on 80% of the county's average median income, meaning it includes both the poor and a slice of the middle class — people who face financial stress but might not ordinarily qualify for government aid based on income.

For researchers, the pilot could give them a fuller picture of what happens when a range of people are sent payments that guarantee a basic living. For Steele, 57, it's a welcome financial boost that helped her pay for car insurance and groceries.

"It lessens my bills," said Steele, who lives in the village of Ellenville with her retired husband. "People think because you've been working so many years, that you make this tremendous amount of money. But no, actually."

Less than 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of New York City, Ulster County is a popular destination for weekenders headed to Woodstock or the Catskill Mountains. Its big city, Kingston, is small, with 23,000 people. Basic income programs elsewhere tend to focus on cities. In contrast, this upstate program stretches out over a mix of places: a city, small towns and remote



A man walks across the street in Ellenville, N.Y., Wednesday, June 16, 2021. Less than 100 miles north of New York City, Ulster County is popular destination for weekenders headed to Woodstock or the Catskill Mountains.

Associated Press

areas many miles from bus lines and supermarkets.

"Showing that this approach will work not just in urban areas, but for rural parts of the country — which we know is one of our big national problems — I think there's great opportunity there," said Ulster County Executive Patrick Ryan.

Ryan saw cash payments as a way to help local families struggling to get ahead, or even get by, as the pandemic ebbs. Many people in the county were already stretched thin by housing costs before the pandemic, when a large influx of New York City residents led to skyrocketing real estate prices, he said.

The first payments were made in mid-May. Recipients of the money can spend it as they wish, but will be asked to participate in periodic surveys about their physical health, mental health and employment status.

The Center for Guaranteed Income Research at the

University of Pennsylvania, which the school formed with the Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, is evaluating the pilot program.

Recipient Eric Luna, a 26-year-old electrical lab technician, said the money will help pay the bills at the home he recently helped his parents buy in Walkill. But he also hopes to set some aside, possibly for a master's degree.

"I'm also learning how to save money as well," he said. "So this will be a learning experience."

There were more than 4,200 applicants for the program in a county of 178,000 people. Center for Guaranteed Income Research co-founder Stacia West, who is evaluating more than 20

such pilot programs, is interested in seeing how spending compares to cities like Stockton, California, where more than a third went for food.

"Knowing what we know about barriers to employment, especially in rural areas, we may see more money going toward transportation than we've ever seen before in any other experiment," said West, also a professor at the University of Tennessee College of Social Work. "But it remains to be seen."

Proponents of guaranteed incomes say recipients can decide how to spend the money best — be it food, job searches or to replace a refrigerator. The money can complement the exist-

ing social safety net, they say, or can be used as an emergency response when the economy starts tanking.

The end goal for a number of advocates is a universal basic income, or UBI, which would distribute cash payment programs for all adults.

The UBI idea helped fuel a stronger-than-expected Democratic presidential primary run last year by Andrew Yang, who proposed \$1,000 a month for every American adult.

Yang, who has a second home in Ulster County, is now running for New York City mayor with a basic income proposal to help lower-income residents.

Officials say Yang hasn't been involved in Ulster's program, but that the non-profit he founded, Humanity Forward, was helpful in sharing experiences on starting a UBI pilot.

Critics of cash transfer programs worry about their effectiveness and cost compared to aid programs that target funds for food, shelter or for help raising children.

Drake University economics professor Heath Henderson is concerned the programs miss needier people less likely to apply, including those without homes.

While there are times people might benefit from a cash infusion, the money is unlikely to address the structural issues holding people back, like inadequate health care and schools, he said.

"If we keep thinking about remedying poverty in terms of just throwing cash at people, you're not thinking about the structures that kind of reproduce poverty in the first place and you're not really solving the problem at all," Henderson said. □



Officials: Deadly Pride parade crash appears unintentional

By KELLI KENNEDY

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)

— A member of a men's chorus group unintentionally slammed into fellow chorists at the start of a Pride parade in South Florida, killing one member of the group and seriously injuring another, the group's director said Sunday, correcting initial speculation that it was a hate crime directed at the gay community. Wilton Manors Vice Mayor Paul Rolli and Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis said the early investigation shows it was an accident. The 77-year-old driver was taken into custody, but police said no charges have been filed and the investigation is ongoing.

The elderly driver had ailments that prevented him from walking, according to a statement Sunday from Fort Lauderdale Police, who said he was cooperating with the investigation and there was no evidence drugs or alcohol was involved.

"The early investigation now indicates it looks like it was a tragic accident, but nobody's saying finally what it is," Rolli told The Associated Press in a phone interview. The driver and the victims were a part of the Fort Lauderdale Gay Men's Chorus



Police and firefighters respond after a truck drove into a crowd of people injuring them during The Stonewall Pride Parade and Street Festival in Wilton Manors, Fla., on Saturday, June 19, 2021.

Associated Press

family, a small 25-member group of mostly older men. "Our fellow Chorus members were those injured and the driver is also a part of the Chorus family. To my knowledge, this was not an attack on the LGBTQ community," President Justin Knight said in a statement Sunday, calling it "an unfortunate accident."

Rolli was on the float in front of the chorus truck along with Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis and other

city officials at a staging area where the floats were being readied. Trantalis said the driver of a pickup truck suddenly accelerated when he was told he was next in the parade, crashing into the victims. The driver continued across all lanes of traffic, ultimately crashing into a fence on the other side of the street, police said.

Rolli was on the other side of the float and didn't witness the crash, but jumped

off immediately and ran to the victims. In the confusion, it was unclear what happened.

"People were really distraught and some people were crying," said Rolli, who explained that the crash happened in an area where the floats were lining up, so there weren't as many parade-goers. "I was getting phone calls from people I knew at the other end waiting for the parade saying, 'Is this true? Is that

true, do we have anything to worry about?' You don't know at that point."

Fort Lauderdale Police said no arrests have been made saying they are conducting a thorough investigation with the FBI, nothing in a statement they are "considering and evaluating all possibilities."

Trantalis, who is Fort Lauderdale's first openly gay mayor, initially told reporters the act was deliberate, adding to the confusion Saturday night.

"It terrorized me and all around me ... I feared it could be intentional based on what I saw from mere feet away," he said in a Twitter statement Sunday. "As the facts continue to be pieced together, a picture is emerging of an accident in which a truck careened out of control."

Wilton Manors is a tight-knit community near Fort Lauderdale with a vibrant downtown filled with cute shops, where people line up for Rosie's famous hamburgers or to gossip and drink at Georgie's Alibi Monkey Bar.

Photos and video from the scene showed Democratic U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz in tears while in a convertible at the parade. □

VA moves to offer gender confirmation surgery to vets



In this Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021, file photo, Secretary of Veterans Affairs nominee Denis McDonough speaks during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on Capitol Hill, in Washington.

Associated Press

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)

— The Department of Veterans Affairs is moving to of-

fer transgender veterans gender confirmation surgery, Secretary Denis McDonough announced at a

Pride Month event in Orlando Saturday.

McDonough said in prepared remarks that the move was "the right thing to do," and that it was part of an effort to overcome a "dark history" of discrimination against LGBTQ service members. The move is just the first step in what's likely to be a yearslong federal rulemaking process to expand VA health benefits to cover the surgery, but McDonough said the VA will use the time to "develop capacity to meet the surgical needs" of transgender veterans.

The decision, he said, will allow "transgender vets to go through the full gender confirmation process with VA by their side." Mc-

Donough also referenced what he said were higher rates of mental illness and suicidal thoughts among LGBTQ veterans, and a fear of discrimination that prevents those veterans from seeking care.

"We're making these changes not only because they are the right thing to do, but because they can save lives," he said.

McDonough said the decision was based on the "recommendation of our clinicians, so this is a health care decision that has very real physical health care impacts as well as significant mental health impacts."

The National Center for Transgender Equality estimates that there are more

than 134,000 transgender veterans and over 15,000 transgender individuals serving in the military today. McDonough's announcement is the latest in a series of moves by the Biden administration to expand protections and benefits to transgender individuals in the military.

Just days into his term, President Joe Biden signed an executive order overturning a Trump administration ban on transgender individuals serving in the military. And in February, McDonough ordered a review of the department's policies to "ensure that transgender Veterans and employees do not face discrimination on the basis of their gender identity and expression." □

Israeli PM: World powers must 'wake up' on Iran nuclear deal

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett opened his first Cabinet meeting on Sunday by slamming Iran's newly-elected president and calling on world powers to "wake up" to the perils of returning to a nuclear agreement with Tehran.

Later in the day, Bennett warned Gaza's militant Hamas rulers that Israel would not tolerate even minor attacks from the territory in the wake of last month's 11-day war, saying "our patience is running out." But Israel also said it would allow limited agricultural exports from Gaza for the first time since the war was halted by an informal cease-fire.

Iran's hard-line judiciary chief, Ebrahim Raisi, was elected Saturday with 62% of the vote amid historically low turnout. He is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Raisi has not commented specifically on the event.

At the Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, Bennett said Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had chosen the "hangman of Tehran" to be the country's next president, a man "infamous among Iranians and across the world for leading the death committees that executed thousands of innocent Iranian citizens



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, center, flanked by Alternate Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, left, chairs the first weekly cabinet meeting of the new government in Jerusalem, Sunday, June 20, 2021.

Associated Press

throughout the years."

Raisi's ascendancy comes at a sensitive time for the region, as Iran and world powers ramp up efforts to resurrect Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal, which granted Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

For weeks, Iranian and American diplomats have been negotiating a return to the accord in Vienna through European intermediaries. Talks resumed Sunday, the first round since the election that put hard-liners firmly in control across Iran's government.

Israel was staunchly opposed to the landmark nu-

clear deal and welcomed then-President Donald Trump's decision to unilaterally withdraw the U.S. from it. Since then, the agreement has unraveled, with Iran abandoning all its limitations on enrichment after the Trump administration restored crippling economic sanctions. Tehran is currently enriching uranium at its highest levels ever, though still short of weapons-grade levels.

Although the White House has yet to weigh in on Iran's election, President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said on Sunday that the outcome was unlikely to affect

nuclear negotiations because Iran's supreme leader wants the deal restored. "The person who makes the decision about whether Iran will go back into the Iran nuclear deal, will assume its nuclear obligations under international law, is not the president of Iran, it is the supreme leader of Iran, and that person did not change from before the election," Sullivan said on CNN's "State of the Union." Bennett said Raisi's election was "the last chance for the world powers to wake up before returning to the nuclear agreement and to understand who they're doing business with. These

guys are murderers, mass murderers."

Israel, which is believed to have its own undeclared nuclear arsenal, has long opposed arch-enemy Iran's nuclear program and has vowed to prevent Tehran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Iran insists its nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes.

Earlier this month, Israel's outgoing Mossad intelligence chief signaled that Israel was behind a string of recent attacks targeting the country's nuclear program.

Bennett heads a broad coalition of parties ranging from hard-line Jewish nationalists to liberal factions and a small Islamist party. His government was sworn in last week, sending Benjamin Netanyahu to the opposition after a record 12 years as prime minister.

Later on Sunday, at a memorial ceremony for Israelis killed in the 2014 Gaza war, Bennett warned Hamas that Israel "will not tolerate violence, we will not tolerate a drizzle."

He appeared to be referring to incendiary balloons launched from Gaza in recent days that have set fields ablaze inside Israel. Last week, Israel launched airstrikes on two occasions in response to the balloons sent by activists mobilized by Hamas.

Last month's Gaza war was halted by an informal cease-fire. □

Suspect arraigned in killing of American student in Russia

MOSCOW (AP) — A court in central Russia on Sunday arraigned a suspect on murder charges in the death of an American woman who was studying at a local university.

The body of 34-year-old Catherine Serou was found Saturday in a wooded area near the city of Nizhny Novgorod, 400 kilometers (250 miles) east of Moscow. She had been missing since Tuesday.

Her mother, Beccy Serou, of Vicksburg, Mississippi,

told U.S. National Public Radio that her daughter had last texted her: "In a car with a stranger. I hope I'm not being abducted."

State news agency RIA-Novosti cited the local court as saying the suspect gave her a ride in his car, then took her to the wooded area and beat her and stabbed her "in the course of a dispute." Russian news reports have identified the suspect as Alexander Popov and said he had a record of violent crimes.

He faces up to life in prison if convicted of murder.

Serou moved from California to Russia in 2019 to study law at Lobachevsky University in Nizhny Novgorod, news reports said.

Beccy Serou told NPR that her daughter was in a hurry to get to a clinic Tuesday and may have gotten into a passing car. "I think that when she saw that the person wasn't driving to the clinic, but instead was driving into a forest, she panicked," Beccy Serou said. □



Alexander Popov, a man who was arrested on suspicion of murder sits behind the glass in a courtroom in the city of Gorodets, 60 km. (36 miles) north-west of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, Sunday, June 20, 2021.

Associated Press

EU diplomat: mistrust at core of Lebanon political crisis

BEIRUT (AP) — A struggle for power and strong mistrust is at the heart of the fight between Lebanese political leaders and the deadlock over government formation, the European Union's foreign policy chief said Sunday.

"It is clear a fight for the distribution of power and I have to say there is also strong mistrust," Josep Borrell told a group of reporters before leaving Beirut. "It is difficult to get an agreement between people that don't trust each other."

A power struggle has emerged between premier-designate Saad Hariri, named to the post in October, on one side, and President Michel Aoun and his son-in-law Gebran Bassil, who heads the largest bloc in parliament, on the other. The top leaders locked horns over the shape of the government while the country's economic problems, unfolding since late 2019, worsened.

The European Union foreign policy chief was in Lebanon



In this photo released by Lebanese government, Lebanese President Michel Aoun, right, meets with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell at the Presidential Palace in Baabda, east of Beirut, Lebanon, Saturday, June. 19, 2021.

Associated Press

for two days where he met with political, security and military leaders. He delivered a strong message that forming a government is a matter of urgency as the small country is on the verge of total financial col-

lapse.

Lebanon's economy has contracted by over 20% in 2020, poverty has deepened with more than 55% of the population living below the poverty line. The national currency has tum-

bled, losing nearly 90% of its value to the dollar. Blamed on decades of corruption and mismanagement, the World Bank said Lebanon's crisis is likely to rank as one of the worst the world has seen in more than 150

years.

Borrell said European countries are considering sanctions against Lebanese politicians, who he blamed for obstructing the formation of a government. Borrell said the make-up of the new government must be agreed upon by the president and the prime-minister designate Saad Hariri. Aside from technical capabilities, it must have the political support it needs to operate in such difficult conditions, he added.

Borrell said a new government could then reach a deal with the International Monetary Fund, which would then facilitate European Union assistance.

"A ship in the middle of a storm needs a captain... It needs officers of different departments of the ship. If not the ship will sink," Borrell said. "You need a government with technical capacities and political support to implement the decisions, take decisions, and these decisions will not be easy to take." □

Yemeni officials say battle for key city intensifies



A Yemeni fighter backed by the Saudi-led coalition fires his weapon during clashes with Houthi rebels on the Kassara frontline near Marib, Yemen, Sunday, June 20, 2021.

Associated Press

MARIB, Yemen (AP) — Heated battles have taken place in recent days between forces of Yemen's internationally recognized government and the country's Iran-backed rebels around the strategic city of Marib, Yemeni officials said Sunday. The rebels, known as the Houthis, have been trying to seize the area for

months.

Yemeni military officials and tribal leaders from the area said that an estimated dozens of fighters have been killed or injured in the recent fighting. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media, and tribal leaders asked that their identity be

concealed for their own security.

Since Friday, Houthi forces launched attacks on several frontline areas in the outskirts of Marib, said Lieutenant General Saggeer Azeez, chief of staff for the military of Yemen's internationally recognized government. He confirmed that the fighting led to casualties among Yemeni government forces.

Saudi-led coalition airstrikes responded to the attacks on Sunday, according to Maj. Gen. Nasser al-Zaibani, director of military operations of the Yemeni army, which fights alongside the coalition. Meanwhile, a Houthi official said that they have deployed at least 200 additional fighters to the frontline near Marib in the past 24 hours. He also spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

The Houthis have been at-

tempting since February to capture Marib to complete their control over the northern part of Yemen. But they have not made substantial progress and suffered heavy losses amid stiff resistance from government forces aided by the Saudi-led coalition supporting them.

This week's fighting also comes amid attempts by Yemen's neighbor, Oman, to broker peace talks between the Houthis and the government.

Last week, the United Nations' outgoing special envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said he hoped a recent diplomatic effort by Oman, which has played a mediating role in other Middle East conflicts, would bring results. He expressed "deep regret" that he had failed to mediate an end to the conflict during his tenure. Yemen has been embroiled in a civil war since 2014, when the Houthis

swept across much of the north and seized the capital, Sanaa, forcing the internationally recognized government into exile.

The Saudi-led coalition entered the war the following year on the side of the government. The war has killed more than 130,000 people and spawned the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The fight for Marib also threatens to escalate the wider war and has stirred international outcry because the city houses over a million displaced persons, many of whom live in camps on the outskirts of the city.

Houthi missile and explosives-laden drone attacks have hit residential and civilian areas inside the city itself. Earlier this month, they hit a gas station, killing a total of 20 people, including children, according to Liz Theissen, a spokeswoman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. □



As Brazil tops 500,000 deaths, protests against president

By MARCELO SILVA DE SOUZA
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Anti-government protesters took to the streets in more than a score of cities across Brazil on Saturday as the nation's confirmed death toll from COVID-19 soared past half a million — a tragedy many critics blame on President Jair Bolsonaro's attempt to minimize the disease.

Thousands gathered in downtown Rio de Janeiro waving flags with slogans such as "Get out Bolsonaro. Government of hunger and unemployment."

"Brazil is experiencing a great setback. The country was an exemplary country for vaccination in the world. We have widely rec-

ognized institutions, but today we are in a sad situation", said Isabela Gouljor, a 20-year-old student who joined the protest in Rio.

Other marchers hoisted posters reading: "500 thousand deaths. It's his fault," alluding to Bolsonaro.

Similar marches took place in at least 22 of Brazil's 26 states, as well as in the Federal District, Brasilia. They were promoted by left-wing opposition parties who have been heartened by Bolsonaro's declining poll ratings with next year's presidential race looming.

"Get out Bolsonaro, genocidal," yelled Rio demonstrators, some of them wearing t-shirts or masks with the image of former leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva — who leads



Demonstrators march holding a banner with a message that reads in Portuguese; "Get out genocidal Bolsonaro and all your government" during a protest against Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and his handling of the pandemic and economic policies protesters say harm the interests of the poor and working class, in Cuiaba, Brazil, Saturday, June 19, 2021.

Associated Press

Bolsonaro in some polls.

In São Paulo, protesters

dropped red balloons as a tribute to the victims of the

virus

Bolsonaro's supporters have taken more often to the streets over the past month, in large part because many agree with his dismissal of restrictions meant to stifle the coronavirus and anger that lockdown measures have hurt businesses.

Critics say such messages, as well as Bolsonaro's promotion of disproven treatments such as hydroxychloroquine, have contributed to the soaring death toll and a sluggish vaccine campaign that has fully inoculated less than 12% of the population.

The country of some 213 million people is registering nearly 100,000 new infections and 2,000 deaths a day. □

U.S. general: 'wildfire of terrorism' on march in Africa

By MOSA'AB ELSHAMY
TAN-TAN, Morocco (AP)

— A senior U.S. general warned Friday that the "wildfire of terrorism" is sweeping across a band of Africa and needs the world's attention. He spoke at the close of large-scale U.S.-led war games with American, African and European troops.

The African Lion war games, which lasted nearly two weeks, stretched across Morocco, a key U.S. ally, with smaller parts held in Tunisia and Senegal. The annual drills were skipped last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, head of the U.S. Africa Command, praised the work accomplished in joint operations, and painted a dark picture of threats besetting parts of Africa.

"I am concerned about the security situation across a band of Africa," from

the Sahel region in the west to the Horn of Africa, Townsend told reporters. He noted deadly attacks by al-Qaida and Islamic State-linked jihadis and al-Shabab. "All of them are on the march," he said.

African neighbors are helping governments deal with the threat, but, he added, "all of that does not seem to be sufficient enough to stop what I call ... (the) wildfire of terrorism that's sweeping that region."

African Lion saw more than 7,000 troops from seven countries and NATO carry out air, land and sea exercises together.

"It has helped our interoperability, our joint capabilities, and provided readiness and a good opportunity to build cohesion across the forces," said Maj. Gen. Andrew Rohling, commander of the U.S. Army's Southern European Task Force Africa. He spoke Friday in the

desert town of Tan-Tan.

There was a hitch at the start, with Spain withdrawing from the war games citing budgetary reasons. Press reports attributed the move to Spain's poor relations with Morocco, a former key partner.

The two countries have been at loggerheads since Spain took in the leader of the Polisario Front independence movement — Morocco's No.1 enemy — for COVID-19 treatment in a Spanish hospital earlier this year. The Polisario is fighting for independence for the Western Sahara, a vast region that Morocco claims as its own.

During the exercise, Morocco held some airborne operations near the Western Sahara and not far from Polisario refugee camps in Tindouf, in neighboring Algeria.

"Those activities have been perfectly conducted and



Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, head of the United States Africa Command, center, arrives alongside General Belkhir el-Farouk, Right, Moroccan Southern Zone Commander, to his right, to watch a large scale drill as part of the African Lion military exercise, in Tantan, south of Agadir, Morocco, Friday, June 18, 2021.

Associated Press

agreed upon between the two militaries," Moroccan Brigadier Gen. Mohammed Jamil told The Associated Press.

Townsend, asked whether any action spilled into the disputed Western Sahara, was categorical: "I can con-

firm it did not."

The participating countries in African Lion were the U.S., Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Italy, The Netherlands and Britain. Observers also attended from countries including Egypt, Qatar, Niger and Mali. □

LOCAL



MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Center Visit our newest Location on Palm Beach!

PALM BEACH — MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Center just opened a third walk-in location on Palm Beach at Budget Car Rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar. The other two locations are at the Cove Mall and near the Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort at the Mill.

All three fit2fly test centers offer your best option for the post vacation COVID-19 test which has been a requirement since January 26th 2021 by the U.S. before returning home. All passengers going to the United States, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a negative (antigen or PCR) COVID-19 test result of a test taken maximum three days prior to boarding the flight, or documentation of recovery from COVID-19. MedCare's testing centers in and close to the hotels provide you with an easy and secure solution.

MedCare Clinic, a high-quality medical clinic that is specialized in urgent care for tourists and that has been appointed as the national COVID-19 clinic for tourists, and Laboratorio di Servizio, a full-service modern medical laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment, have partnered up to provide fast and reliable COVID-19 testing to all. Laboratorio di Servizio is ISO-15189:2012 accredited by the Dutch Council for Accreditation (M317).

Rapid PCR

As Aruba resumes to receive more and more visitors each month, one thing has become very clear: testing is critical. Thus far MedCare Clinic has been offering high-volume laboratory testing with results in 24 hours or less. The newest service on the market is Rapid PCR, where you receive your results in minutes not hours.

Just steps away from you

The Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers are located at the Cove Mall, near the Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort at the Mill, and now also at Budget car rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar. These three locations at a stone's throw from your resort, condominium, or other vacation accommodation. Walk-ins are welcome. It is recommended that the tests are done timely, as the negative test is only accepted if taken up to three days before boarding your flight. MedCare Fit2Fly Testing Center at the Cove Mall is opposite the Holiday Inn and is open every day for walk-ins from 8 AM through 10 PM. MedCare's other location is situated at The Courtyard Aruba Resort, is across the street from the RIU Hotel and is open every day from 8:30 AM until 2 PM. The Newest location at Budget Car Rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar is open daily from 5 PM to 9 PM.



At your hotel

For a selection of hotels/resorts in Aruba, MedCare has setup Testing Centers on site. The hotels/resorts at which we have a testing site are: Divi All Inclusive, Divi Dutch Village, Divi Golf, Divi Phoenix, Divi Tamarijn, Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort, Hyatt Regency, Renaissance, and the Ritz-Carlton Resort. Please contact your front desk for more information on our Testing Centers at these properties.

Costs and timing

Passengers must be tested with a viral test that could be either an Antigen Test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), such as the reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The price for the Antigen Test is only \$50, and the PCR Test is available, for \$125, The new rapid PCR will be \$150 (results in 30 minutes.) MedCare offers the easier and substantially cheaper Antigen Test that is acceptable for travel to the U.S. as per the CDC guidelines. Pre-travel testing is not covered by the Aruban visitor insurance. Please contact your insurance company to verify if testing costs are insured. Results are e-mailed to you within 24 hours of testing.

Private bookings

For your convenience, Medcare also offers private testing at your accommodation/hotel room for a one-time service fee of \$120. This fee covers testing up to 10 people (one appointment, at one location and a specific time). Additional persons will be charged \$10 per person. ☐

For more information, please contact:

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<https://medcare.aw/en/covid-19-testing>

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Vaccination Status in Aruba

ORANJESTAD - According to ourworldindata.org, Aruba leads as a country in the Caribbean with the highest vaccines administered per 100 inhabitants.

Aruba's recovery appears to be on the right track. Tourists are excited to travel again and are looking for a travel destination where a high percentage of their population has been vaccinated. A destination where they can be sure that the spread of the virus is limited or minimal. Aruba is now the island in the Caribbean with the highest number of people vaccinated per 100 inhabitants and ranks second in the world as the best vaccinated country. This is certainly reason enough to be proud as a country.

According to Ronella Croes, CEO of the Aruba Tourism Authority, testing for visitors will be dropped when collective immunity is reached in Aruba. Herd immunity will be reached when 85% of the local population is vaccinated. Herd immunity is important for the island, because it means being on the road to recovery for the health of our local people, tourism and economy.

The vaccination rate has to be increased in order to reach the island's goal of 85% vaccinations of the population. Right now 66,635 locals had been vaccinated. This represents 67% of the island's population. A total of 67% of the population over 60 years old are fully vaccinated. The more locals vaccinate, the less chance there is of the virus infecting new people and keep on mutating into different strains, which our current vaccines offer no protection against. Vaccinations are taking place on appointments, including door to door efforts to reach all neighborhoods on the island.

Vaccination Status in Aruba

These are the local stats regarding corona vaccination as of May 19, 2021.

- 66,635 locals are vaccinated
- 15,891 locals received 1st dose
- 50,744 locals received 2nd dose

As of June 1, 2021 locals who are fully vaccinated are allowed to travel to and from Aruba, without the requirement to do a corona test.

Wearing a face masks is not mandatory anymore in Aruba but establishment are authorized to require their guests to wear a face mask upon entering their premises. Please follow all rules accordingly.

For more information on travel requirements go to www.aruba.com. □



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Aruba's underwater wonderland

ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remem-

ber; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders



to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

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Hit by a ransomware attack? Your payment may be deductible

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As ransomware attacks surge, the FBI is doubling down on its guidance to affected businesses: Don't pay the cybercriminals. But the U.S. government also offers a little-noticed incentive for those who do pay: The ransoms may be tax deductible.

The IRS offers no formal guidance on ransomware payments, but multiple tax experts interviewed by The Associated Press said deductions are usually allowed under law and established guidance. It's a "silver lining" to ransomware victims, as some tax lawyers and accountants put it.

But those looking to discourage payments are less sanguine. They fear the deduction is a potentially problematic incentive that could entice businesses to pay ransoms against the advice of law enforcement. At a minimum, they say, the deductibility sends a discordant message to businesses under duress.

"It seems a little incongruous to me," said New York Rep. John Katko, the top Republican on the House Committee on Homeland Security.

Deductibility is a piece of a bigger quandary stemming from the rise in ransomware



In this photo March 22, 2013, file photo, the exterior of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) building in Washington.

attacks, in which cybercriminals scramble computer data and demand payment for unlocking the files. The government doesn't want payments that fund criminal gangs and could encourage more attacks. But failing to pay can have devastating consequences for businesses and potentially for the economy overall.

A ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline last month led to gas shortages in parts of the United States. The company, which trans-

ports about 45% of fuel consumed on the East Coast, paid a ransom of 75 bitcoin — then valued at roughly \$4.4 million. An attack on JBS SA, the world's largest meat processing company, threatened to disrupt food supplies. The company said it had paid the equivalent of \$11 million to hackers who broke into its computer system.

Ransomware has become a multibillion-dollar business, and the average payment was more than \$310,000 last year, up 171%

from 2019, according to Palo Alto Networks.

The companies that pay ransomware demands directly are well within their rights to claim a deduction, tax experts said. To be tax deductible, businesses expenses should be considered ordinary and necessary. Companies have long been able to deduct losses from more traditional crimes, such as robbery or embezzlement, and experts say ransomware payments are usually valid, too. "I would counsel a client

to take a deduction for it," says Scott Harty, a corporate tax attorney with Alston & Bird. "It fits the definition of an ordinary and necessary expense."

Don Williamson, a tax professor at the Kogod School of Business at American University, wrote a paper about the tax consequences of ransomware payments in 2017. Since then, he said, the rise of ransomware attacks has only strengthened the case for the IRS to allow ransomware payments as tax deductions.

"It's becoming more common, so therefore it becomes more ordinary," he said.

That's all the more reason, critics say, to disallow ransomware payments as tax deductions.

"The cheaper we make it to pay that ransom, then the more incentives we're creating for companies to pay, and the more incentives we're creating for companies to pay, the more incentive we're creating for criminals to continue," said Josephine Wolff, a cybersecurity policy professor at the Fletcher School of Tufts University.

For years, ransomware was more of an economic nuisance than a major national threat. □

Associated Press

Appeals court upholds FCC subsidy ban for Huawei purchases

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A federal appeals court refused Friday to hear Chinese tech giant Huawei's request to throw out a rule used to bar rural phone carriers on national security grounds from using government funds to purchase its equipment.

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Federal Communications Commission was fully within its power and competence to issue the rule barring "Universal Service Fund" subsidies recipients from buying equipment or services from companies deemed national security risks.

The three-judge panel also dismissed a claim by Huawei Technologies Ltd

that the FCC lacked the expertise to designate the company's equipment as a security risk to U.S. telecommunications infrastructure. "Assessing security risks to telecom networks falls in the FCC's wheelhouse," the judges wrote in a 60-page opinion, rejecting any suggestion it was some sort of "junior-varsity" agency on national security matters. Huawei did not immediately offer a response to the ruling.

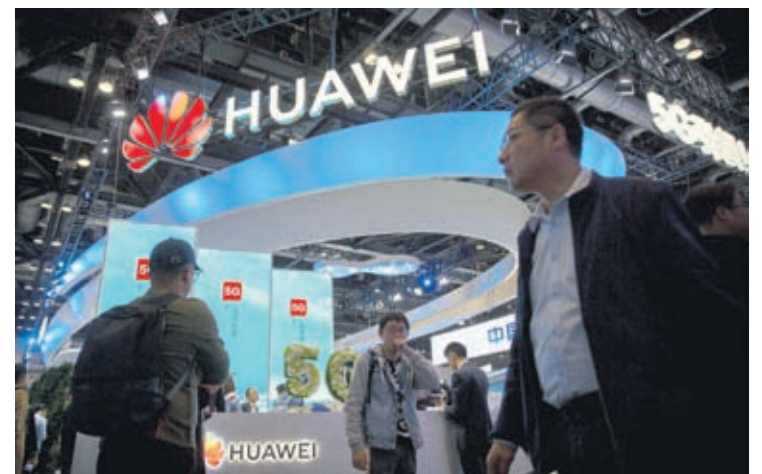
The Trump administration imposed a series of sanctions on Huawei, claiming it could not be trusted not to spy for Beijing because Chinese law so compels it. Huawei says it is employee-not government-owned

and denies it might facilitate Chinese spying.

Huawei sued the FCC in late 2019 after the agency voted to bar rural carriers from using government subsidies to buy equipment from Huawei or its Chinese rival, ZTE Corp. At the time, the company called the decision "based on politics, not security." It claimed the FCC was exceeding its authority by making national security judgments.

Friday's decision was in line with a longstanding tradition of U.S. courts not to second-guess government judgments about national security.

Huawei's U.S. sales plunged after a congressional panel warned in 2012 the com-



In this Oct. 31, 2019, file photo, attendees walk past a display for 5G services from Chinese technology firm Huawei at the PT Expo in Beijing.

Associated Press

pany and ZTE were security risks and told carriers to avoid them. In May of 2019, the Trump administration tightened the noose

by blocking access to U.S. technology and components, including semiconductors and Google's popular mobile services. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
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 - 10 Singer Fitzgerald
 - 11 Stumble
 - 13 Mimic
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 - 15 Frozen dessert
 - 17 School org.
 - 18 Pudding dessert
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 - 20 Negating word
 - 21 Swimming spot
 - 22 Pharmacy stock
 - 25 Band-leader Goodman
 - 26 Agents, for short
 - 27 Used a chair
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 - 29 Pastry dessert
 - 33 Singer Damone
 - 34 Cheese-filled dessert
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- 1 Savage creature
- 2 Greek vowel
- 3 Get some shuteye
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- 5 Have an influence on
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- 8 Nero, to Augustus
- 9 News-paper part
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- 21 Funnel-shaped flowers
- 22 Chauffeur
- 23 Stops working
- 24 Posh
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- 27 Kicks off
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- 30 Disco's Summer
- 31 Rocker John
- 32 Detroit team
- 36 Black or Baltic

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Saturday's answer

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6-21

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONG FELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three U's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-21

CRYPTOQUOTE

ALSOQ UAE RPWLX CWYQ WLZA

Z O Q MAPCH, UAE KEBZ

DPAZQSZ WZ, MQ KEBZ

DPAZQSZ WZ RU SOVLXWLX ZOQ

MAPCH, — QCWQ MWQBQC

Saturday's Cryptoquote: AMBITION IS THE PATH TO SUCCESS. PERSISTENCE IS THE VEHICLE YOU ARRIVE IN. — BILL BRADLEY



Smoke from the Chemtool industrial fire wafts across Nazarene Drive Tuesday, June 15, 2021, in Rockton, Ill., creating a haze over a neighborhood.

Associated Press

Foam containing 'forever chemicals' used against plant fire

By JOHN FLESHER
AP Environmental Writer

A company hired to help extinguish a fire that gutted a northern Illinois chemical plant this week used foam containing toxic compounds that have tainted surface waters and groundwater across the U.S., officials said Thursday. The private contractor sprayed the foam for about three hours Tuesday at the Chemtool Inc. factory near Rockton, despite concerns raised by government regulators the previous day, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency told The Associated Press.

The chemicals later were cleaned up and stored in a container, Fire Chief Kirk Wilson said at a news conference Thursday. Earlier, outside experts told the AP it would be difficult to prevent at least some of the material from seeping into groundwater.

The foam was made with chemicals belonging to a group known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, which are used in a wide variety of industrial and household products, EPA said. They have been linked to numerous health problems including cancer and damage to organs including the liver, kidneys and thyroid gland.

Foams containing PFAS

typically are used to extinguish highly flammable or combustible fires involving gas tankers and oil refineries, EPA said in a statement. Wilson said he ordered the company to switch to another type of foam that didn't have PFAS after regulators informed him that PFAS-containing foam was being used.

No contamination of groundwater or the nearby Rock River with the compounds has been detected but tests are underway, the Illinois EPA said in a separate statement to AP.

"We will be fully transparent with the public and share test results and additional guidance as soon as we are able to do so," the state agency said.

Authorities are still investigating the cause of explosions Monday that tore through the plant near the Wisconsin state line, prompting evacuation of about 1,000 residents within a 1-mile (1.6-kilometer) radius of the plant.

Chemtool, which manufactures lubricants, grease products and other fluids, hired U.S. Fire Pump to help extinguish the fire. The Louisiana-based company pumps high volumes of water and foams to smother large industrial fires.

Crews dug a trench around the facility and placed

booms in the Rock River to prevent runoff from escaping, Wilson said Wednesday, adding there had been no release of toxins into waterways and that hazardous materials "are contained at this point."

In an email responding to AP inquiries, EPA said officials with the agency and with Illinois' environment department had raised concerns with Chemtool on Monday about using foam containing PFAS and requested a discussion about it with leaders of the firefighting operation.

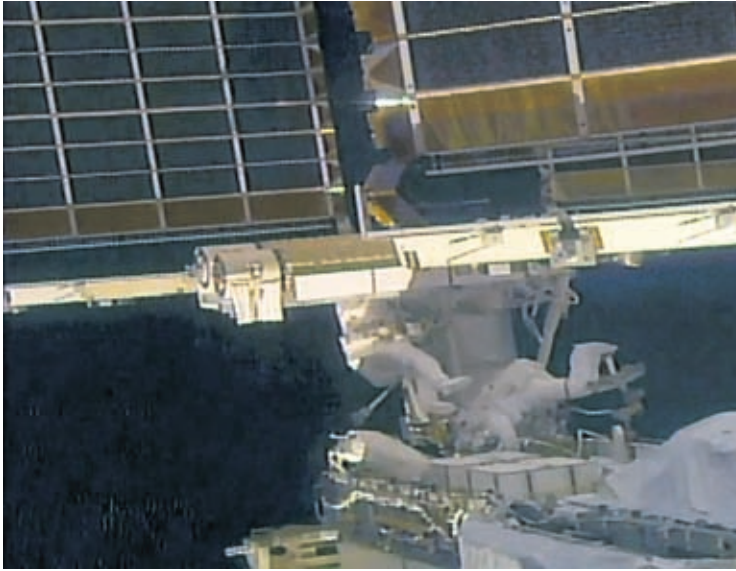
The next day, after realizing the foam pumping was underway, the state and federal agencies requested a halt to review containment controls, EPA said.

"Since then, foam which does not contain PFAS has become available onsite and that is what is being used for fire-suppression operations," the federal agency said.

U.S. Fire Pump marketing executive Jonny Carroll declined comment.

Alicia Gauer, spokeswoman for The Lubrizol Corporation, parent company of Chemtool, said before the foam was applied, "we provided all requested information, including safety data sheets, to incident command and those at the scene." □

Take 2: Spacewalking astronauts install new solar panel



In this image taken from NASA video, NASA astronaut Shane Kimbrough, left, and French astronaut Thomas Pesquet work on the solar array outside the International Space Station, Sunday, June 20 2021.

Associated Press

By **MARCIA DUNN**
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.
(AP) — Spacewalking as-

tronauts equipped the International Space Station with the first in a series of powerful new solar panels Sunday, overcoming suit problems and other obstacles with muscle and persistence.

It took two spacewalks for French astronaut Thomas Pesquet and NASA astronaut Shane Kimbrough to install and unfurl the panel to its full 63 feet (19 meters) in length.

The solar wing unrolled like a red carpet once the final set of bolts was released, relying solely on pent-up energy. The slow but steady extension took 10 minutes, with station cameras providing live TV views.

"It is beautiful," Pesquet called out.

"Well done, both of you," Mission Control replied once the operation was complete. "That was great to see."

As the 6 1/2-hour spacewalk concluded, Kimbrough, who has three children, wished "Happy Father's Day" to all the flight controller dads. "Thanks for working with us on a Sunday."

The astronauts started Sunday's spacewalk picking up where they left off Wednesday, when a string of problems prevented them from unrolling the high-tech solar panel.

"Remember: You are butterflies with biceps today," astronaut Megan McArthur radioed from inside.

After pushing and tugging, the spacewalkers managed to unfold and align the solar panel so both halves were now end to end, resembling a roll of paper towels. Their shout of "Woo-hoo!" was met with applause in Mission Control.

The two had to wait until they were back on the night side of Earth — and the station's old solar panels were no longer soaking up sunlight and generating power — before making the final power connections. Otherwise, they could be shocked.

While awaiting darkness, the camera-and-light as-

sembly on Kimbrough's helmet came loose, even though he'd switched to a different suit to avoid the trouble he encountered last time. Pesquet did his best to secure it with wire ties, as the minutes ticked by. His effort paid off, and the final step — the actual unfurling — went off without a hitch.

This new solar wing — with five more to come — will give the aging station a much needed electrical boost, as demand for experiments and space tourists grows.

NASA originally allotted two spacewalks for the job — one for each solar panel being installed. But managers added a third spacewalk, given all the earlier problems. Pesquet and Kimbrough will go back out Friday to complete work on the second panel delivered by Space X earlier this month.

This first pair will augment the space station's oldest solar wings, which are degrading after 20 years of continuous operation. SpaceX will deliver two more pairs over the next year.

Although smaller than the originals, the new solar panels supplied by Boeing can generate considerably more power. The space station needs this reenergizing if NASA hopes to keep the space station running the rest of this decade, with private guests paying millions

of dollars to come aboard. A Russian film crew is scheduled to launch to the orbiting outpost this fall from Kazakhstan, followed by a string of rich businessmen. SpaceX is providing the rides from Cape Canaveral.

On Wednesday, the display control panel on Kimbrough's suit conked out and he had to return to the air lock to reset it. Then his cooling system registered a momentary pressure spike. Engineers are still evaluating what went wrong.

"Space is hard," Kimbrough tweeted last week. □



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NSA to NSO: NY filmmakers explore circles of surveillance

By **FRANK JORDANS**

BERLIN (AP) — American filmmaker Laura Poitras, known for her award-winning 2014 documentary on former U.S. intelligence contractor Edward Snowden and his revelations about the National Security Agency, has once again turned her camera on the watchmen.

In an exhibition that opened Friday in Berlin, Poitras examines the way the state monitors citizens' lives — both abroad and at home, in New York City.

While her early work on the war in Iraq and the U.S. government surveillance apparatus — including the Oscar-winning "Citizenfour" — follows the long trail of the Sept. 11 attacks, Poitras' new show grapples with the issues of the past year: The COVID-19 pandemic and the fight for racial justice.

The goal remains, Poitras said, to "create experience that has emotional resonance."

"I want to interrogate power," she told The Associated Press in an interview ahead of the show's launch.

Together with artist Sean Vegezzi, Poitras puts view-



A woman walks through an exhibition by American artist and filmmaker Laura Poitras, near the art work "Anarchist" by Laura Poitras in collaboration with Henrik Moltke, at the N.K.B. gallery in Berlin, Germany, on Friday, June 18, 2021.

ers outside an NYPD outpost in Queens used by the Technical Assistance Response Unit, whose role is to monitor political protests. The unit employs military technology to gather intelligence, including on recent Black Lives Matter rallies, but officers seem unaware that they are being watched as they enter and leave the building.

A second video combines exterior shots of the Vernon C. Bain prison barge on the East River with three months of intercepted radio recordings between guards discussing the apparent use of force against inmates. The crowded prison — set up as a temporary facility almost three decades ago — saw high death rates from COVID-19

last year.

Poitras and Vegezzi said they were surprised that the prison's continued existence and the conditions there haven't been taken up by local politicians, given that most of the inmates are local residents awaiting trial for minor crimes.

"As a New Yorker I hope that it's difficult to look at this prison ship and know

that you are complicit in it," Poitras said, admitting: "We are interested in getting this shut down."

The series is completed with a visit to little-known Hart Island, home to one of the largest mass grave sites in the United States with burials dating back to the Civil War era. Vegezzi, whose brother was among a prison detail from Rikers Island tasked with burying the dead, used a drone to show how detainees with little social distancing or protective equipment stacked coffins in deep trenches at the height of the pandemic. The Department of Corrections halted the practice after it became public last year.

The triptych's bleak, distanced footage contrasts with Poitras' 25-minute film "Terror Contagion" about Israeli spyware company NSO and its alleged role in the monitoring of activists around the world. Rights groups including Amnesty International claim that the company's technology has been licensed by repressive regimes to infiltrate the phones of dissidents and journalists, a charge that NSO rejects. □

Associated Press

Jared Kushner has book deal, publication expected in 2022



Jared Kushner does a television interview at the White House on Oct. 26, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **HILLEL ITALIE**
AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of former President Donald Trump and one of his top advisers during his administration, has a book deal. Broadside Books, a conservative imprint of Har-

perCollins Publishers, announced that Kushner's book will come out in early 2022. Kushner has begun working on the memoir, currently untitled, and is expected to write about everything from the Middle East to criminal justice reform to the pandemic.

"His book will be the definitive, thorough recounting of the administration — and the truth about what happened behind closed doors," Broadside announced Tuesday. Financial terms were not disclosed.

Kushner was often at the center of the Trump administration's policies — whether brokering the normalization of relationships between Israel and United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco — the so-called Abraham Accords — or playing a key role in a criminal justice bill passed by Congress in 2018. He has also been the subject of numerous controversies, whether for his financial dealings and potential conflicts of interest or for the administration's widely criticized handling

of COVID-19.

In April 2020, less than two months into the pandemic, Kushner labeled the White House response a "great success story," dismissed "the eternal lockdown crowd" and also said: "I think you'll see by June a lot of the country should be back to normal and the hope is that by July the country's really rocking again."

The signing of Kushner comes during an ongoing debate within the book industry over which Trump officials, notably Trump himself, can be taken on without starting a revolt at the publishing house. Hundreds of Simon & Schuster employees and thousands from outside the company signed a petition this spring condemning the publisher's decision to sign up

former Vice President Mike Pence.

At a Simon & Schuster town hall in May, employees confronted CEO Jonathan Karp, who responded that he felt the company had a mission to hear opposing sides of political debates. He also said that he did not want to publish Trump, who issued his 2015 book "Crippled America" through the Simon & Schuster imprint Threshold Editions, because he didn't think the former president would provide an honest account of his time in office.

Trump issued a statement last week that he was "writing like crazy" and had turned down two offers "from the most unlikely of publishers," a claim widely disputed within the industry. □

Get a grip: Pitchers unsure on eve of sticky stuff crackdown

By JAKE SEINER
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Gerrit Cole hardly expects a smooth transition when Major League Baseball ups its efforts against sticky substances.

Then again, the Yankees ace — like many around the game — isn't entirely sure what's going to happen.

"I don't have a lot of expectations, to be honest," Cole said. "I think I'm in the same boat as everyone else, just waiting for this to play out." Beginning Monday, pitchers will be ejected and suspended for 10 games if caught using foreign substances to doctor baseballs.

Such grip aids — ranging from a tacky mix of rosin and sunscreen to heavy duty concoctions designed for use in strongman competitions — have long been illegal, but the ban has rarely been enforced.

That changes this week. Major and minor league umpires will make regular checks of all pitchers, even if opposing managers don't request inspections — a shift ordered by the commissioner's office and shared with teams via memo on Tuesday.

Umpires will check all starters multiple times and all relievers either at the end of his first inning or when removed, whichever occurs first. Caps, gloves and fingertips will be checked. Umps also may check when they notice sticky balls or when they perceive a pitcher going to his glove, cap, belt, uniform or body in a manner that may be to retrieve or apply a substance.

"It definitely will be probably a little awkward," Cubs manager David Ross said Sunday. "But we'll get through it, adjust."

Players suspended for violations will not be replaced on the active roster. Catchers will also be subject to routine inspections and position players may be searched, too.

"I'm curious like everyone of what its going to look like," Yankees manager Aaron



Cleveland Indians relief pitcher James Karinchak holds the ball between pitches during the eighth inning of the team's baseball game against the Baltimore Orioles, Tuesday, June 15, 2021, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

Boone said. "Are we going to have frisking going on, what that whole process is going to look like? Are guys trying to get away with

things? Certainly that'll be part of it."

"There are probably going to be things we need to continue to iron out," Cole

added.

The perception is that pitchers have gone wild with sticky stuff in recent seasons as high speed cameras have enabled them see the way it enhances spin. The league boosted monitoring of baseballs at the start of this season and found enough evidence of wrongdoing to proceed with a midseason adjustment.

The sticking point for pitchers isn't that MLB wants to crack down — it's the hastiness of the uptick.

Tampa Bay pitcher Tyler Glasnow, diagnosed Tuesday with a partially torn elbow ligament, attributed his injury to adapting ahead of stepped up enforcement. He called the sudden shift "insane" and

"ridiculous."

At a news conference Wednesday, Cole pleaded with the league to better communicate with players. Cole — a suspected user of sticky stuff — said he supports a leveling of the playing field, but also claimed that baseballs have become so slick, even position players are using grip enhancers to control their throws.

There are several alternatives to a full-blown ban MLB could consider down the road, including tackier baseballs or the approval of a controllable substance for use by all pitchers.

For now, pitchers will be punished for anything and everything, leading to concern about an overcorrection. □

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Liberty hold on to beat Sparks in WNBA celebratory matchup

By **JOE REEDY**
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Rebecca Allen scored a season-high 19 points, Sami Whitcomb added 17 and the New York Liberty held on for a 76-73 victory over the Los Angeles Sparks on Sunday in what was billed as "The '97 Game" by the WNBA.

The league, which is celebrating its 25th season this year, held the matchup nearly 24 years to the day of the first game, which was also won by the Liberty on June 21, 1997, at the Great Western Forum.

"Just to think about the history of this league and where it is only 25 years into its existence

it's amazing," Sparks coach and GM Derek Fisher said. "I think the league office is working really hard to grow the game on the global stage. And, you know, we just have to keep doing the work."

New York had a 14-point lead midway through the third quarter, but saw Los Angeles go on a 21-7 run to tie it at 58 going into the final 10 minutes. Allen had two blocked shots in the final minute, including one on a potential go-ahead 3-pointer by Kristi Tolliver with 8.2 seconds remaining. Allen made a pair of free throws after a loose ball foul by Tolliver to give the Liberty a three-point advantage.

Los Angeles had a chance to send it into over-

time, but Nia Coffey missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

The Liberty won despite committing a WNBA season-high 30 turnovers but scored 19 points of offensive rebounds.

Erica Wheeler had 20 points and 10 assists for the Sparks while Coffey and Tolliver scored 15 apiece.

The game was played at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The Sparks are playing at the Convention Center instead of their usual home at Staples Center until after the Olympic break after the arena was reserved for playoff runs by both the Lakers and Clippers. □

Booker gets first triple-double, Suns beat Clippers 120-114

By **DAVID BRANDT**
AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Devin Booker had 40 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for his first career triple-double and the Phoenix Suns overcame Chris Paul's absence to beat the Los Angeles Clippers 120-114 on Sunday in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals.

Paul sat out because of COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Clippers star Kawhi Leonard missed his third straight game because of a sprained right knee. Tied at 93 to start the fourth, the Suns went on a 12-2 run and pulled ahead 105-95 on Cam Johnson's dunk with 8:08 remaining. The Clippers wouldn't go away, though, cutting a 10-point deficit in the final two minutes to 116-114 when Terance Mann hit a 3-pointer with 22 seconds left. Booker scored on a dunk on the next possession to seal Phoenix's seventh straight victory, getting a free lane to the basket on the blown defensive coverage. Game 2 is on Tuesday night in Phoenix.

Booker was productive and efficient in one of his best games of his career. He shot 15 of 29 from the field,



Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker (1) shoots over Los Angeles Clippers forward Marcus Morris Sr. (8) during the first half of Game 1 of the NBA basketball Western Conference finals Sunday, June 20, 2021, in Phoenix.

carving apart a defense that had to play just 36 hours after closing out the Utah Jazz on Friday night. The third quarter featured a stellar scoring duel between Booker and L.A.'s Paul George, who finished with 34 points. Booker scored 18 points in the quarter, and George had 15, including a 3-pointer that tied it at 93 heading to the fourth.

The Suns led 76-68 midway through the third but George scored eight straight points — including six points on two long 3-pointers — to tie it up. It was the start of a 16-2 run that helped Los Angeles take an 84-78 lead.

Booker and the Suns responded quickly. Booker scored 12 points — mostly on mid-range jumpers — in the final 3:09 of the third to

get Phoenix back on track. Deandre Ayton had 20 points and nine rebounds for the Suns. Cameron Payne started for Paul and had 11 points and nine assists. Reggie Jackson added 24 points for the Clippers. The game was a rare stage for both franchises: The Clippers are in the Western Conference finals for the first time in franchise history, while the Suns

haven't been this far in 11 years and have never won an NBA title.

BIG-TIME BOOGIE

The Clippers got a boost from veteran big man DeMarcus Cousins in the second quarter. He came into the game and almost immediately threw down a monster dunk over Dario Saric. He scored 11 points on 4-of-6 shooting in his first five minutes on the court. The talented but off-injured Cousins has only played in two playoff games this season. The four-time All-Star averaged 7.8 points in 16 regular season games with the Clippers this season.

AWARD-WINNING GM

Suns general manager James Jones was named the NBA's Executive of the Year on Sunday. Team President Robert Sarver surprised Jones with the announcement in a short ceremony at midcourt a few minutes before tipoff. Jones came to the team two years ago and has helped build the Valley's best team in 11 seasons. His big move was adding Paul during the offseason but he's also made other key moves, like adding Payne, Torrey Craig and drafting Cameron Johnson. □

Associated Press